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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

DATE 13 FEBRUARY 1962

Copy No. 5

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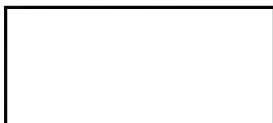
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DEBRIEFING OF FRANCIS GARY POWERS

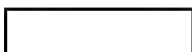
Tape: #1
Date: 13 February 1962
Time: 1445 Hours

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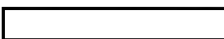
Present:



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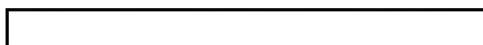


Let the record show that the debriefing of Francis Gary Powers with regard to the U-2 flight over the USSR on 1 May 1960 commenced at 1445 hours, 13 February 1962.

The Debriefing Team is composed of Messrs. 

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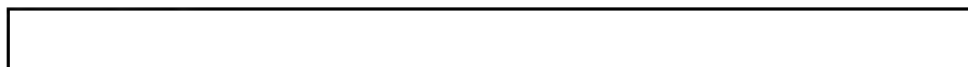
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This is Tape #1. Now,

Frank, will you, in your own words, recount to us your experiences starting with the initial briefing for this series of operations which culminated in the flight of 1 May 1960.

Powers: We were first notified that there might be an operation several days before this took place but we didn't know when or where exactly. A few days after that they told us as well as I can remember who would be going to each site to take care of this particular operation and during the time that we were waiting the pilots who were picked to



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fly the particular mission were shown the maps, the route, and also helped to make annotations on the maps of airfields and other installations that were not indicated on the map when it was printed.

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[REDACTED]

Just let me interrupt here - don't hesitate to name names and places here because we all know what you are talking about and we have to be specific to the best of your recollection.

Powers: This is pretty hazy. I feel that I must be leaving some things out -

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[REDACTED]

We'll go back over that but we want to test your recollection.

Powers: I don't remember the exact times or how long we waited before going but I do know that we did study some routes, possible routes. We didn't know what the mission would be - which one it would be, and we studied at least two different routes and the maps were not up to date and we helped to pinpoint information which would help in navigation. Sometime the latter part of April we were notified that a meeting was called of certain groups of people who were going on this particular mission. We all knew who would

[REDACTED]

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be going on it when it went so we were called in for a
briefing and we were told when it would - when our planes
would leave and this was just several hours before we left
for [] for - I can't remember the name of the base
there - the -

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[] []
Powers: [] There was another group of people who were
going to []

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[] []
Powers: [] yes, and we were told what time the planes would
depart. I think most of this briefing was conducted by the
Security Officer telling us what to take, what not to take
with us to - on the trip.

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Powers: [] I think - I'm not sure because the planes
left at different times and he went to [] I think - I'm
not sure and seems to me as if [] went with us to

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[] - I think - I'm not sure. I know - I think - I
know he was there - I think he was in charge of the security
there, but anyway either the Security Officer, Charlie,
or one of the other security members gave most of the
briefings. We were told where we were going, what to

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take along, what not to take along - no cameras and stuff like that - we didn't know how long we would be there but it was supposed to be as short as possible. I can't remember everything that went on there but it was just a general briefing - no details - many people were in there that didn't know where the flight was going to go.

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[REDACTED]

This took place at -

Powers: At Adana.

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[REDACTED]

At Adana in the area - in the -

Powers: Yes, in our security area in our briefing room. I think maybe Colonel Shelton talked to us - I can't remember. I feel sure that he did but it was very short (illegible) - we didn't have much time - just an hour or two to go back to (illegible) to get something to eat, take a few sandwiches with us and come back and catch a plane, but there were more than one plane and people left at different times. As far as I know that's about all that happened there before we left. Now, you want me to go on with the trip?

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[REDACTED]

Yes. Prior to that shove-off briefing, or that final briefing, which I believe the record will show was on the 26th of April -

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Powers: It was the latter part of April -

25X1A9A [] 1960, yes, about a month prior to that you had become aware, however, of this series of flights, had you not, that you and [] and -

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Powers: Yes.

25X1A9A [] [] were going to be on -
25X1A9A

Powers: Yes, it was some weeks before that but I don't know exactly how long.

25X1A9A [] You had had a preliminary briefing on this that this caper was going to come off -

Powers: Yes, we knew that something was going to come off and we knew that it would be one of several flights. I don't know exactly which one, they didn't know until very shortly - at least I didn't know until shortly before which one of these particular flights would be going.

25X1A9A [] Do you know the name that was given to the May 1 flight?

Powers: Name - I'm sure I did know it -

25X1A9A [] Does Grand slam ring any bell with you?

Powers: Its a familiar word - it was associated with that - there was maybe another name but -

25X1A9A [] Well, go ahead for now

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Powers: Well, we were in this period that between the time we found out that something would be going we studied possible routes, and then it came up to the 26th of April and we got the final briefing before setting off. But that was a group briefing for everyone— no particulars. From there we went to —

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[REDACTED]

This was at Adana?

Powers: Yes, all of this was at Adana. We left Adana at — it was late in the evening, as well as I can remember, on a C 130. I may get these confused because on April the 9th we had another trip that I went on, not as a pilot but as a standby pilot and some of this might be confused with that, I'm not sure.

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[REDACTED]

Let us clarify some here with you - don't worry too much about the fact that you may be off on this. Actually, we are indeed testing your recollection at this point and we'll go over this again to attempt to refresh your memory on some things but the state of your memory at this particular point is quite important too.

Powers: Right now I'm a little nervous and I don't know whether I

[REDACTED]

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can recall all the things that I might be able to later.

Anyway we left Adana - I think it shows there - on April

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26 - arrived in [] and the briefing was that the flight was to go off I think the day after we arrived there.

I don't remember the exact time we arrived but we had time to rest up and the next morning it should go. But there were several delays and each time there was a delay or cancellation the airplane would come in, the flight would be cancelled, the standby pilot, the one who was to back me up, would take the airplane back to Adana.

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[]

Who was that?

Powers: Well, this happened about three or four times - I think

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the first one was [] - wait a minute - I know

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[] studied the map with me - lets see - at different

25X1A9A

times there was - [] was the first one.-

I don't know, but it seems to me that [] was the first one - he and I were to be prepared together and if anything happened to my equipment or my health then he would take over. I think he was the first one. The next was either [] and the

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[]

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25X1A9A one after that was the other one of those two - []

25X1A9A [] - I don't know the exact way they

came, and on the last day, or the day that the flight went,
25X1A9A [] was to back me up. He was pre-^{breathing} briefing when

I was getting prepared to go and [] was on

25X1A9A

mobile control and I had studied this route or these routes

before and some of these other boys hadn't and each time

they would come I would give them a rundown and go over it

with them to prepare them for it in case something happened

to me, just to show them the route and what these annotations

we put on the map meant. And [] was mobile

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control - oh, he brought the last airplane over - his - and -

I'm getting ahead of myself I think - the Intelligence Officer,

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[] I believe, was there - I am pretty

sure he was - no, he was not - it was the Navigator that went

over these maps with me and the other boys when I was

trying to explain the route to them, and I think that was -

seems like it starts with a D - the name - Major - I can't

remember his name. This is coming in a little confused

in my mind right now and I am probably getting everything

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a little out of order. Well, we'll see if we can start over again. When I first arrived there we went into a hangar and got everything prepared to receive the U-2 when it came in - ah, the crews did. We prepared food and places to sleep and, if I'm not mistaken, it was [redacted] and myself who were the first two to prepare to go. We studied the maps on the first afternoon and night and were briefed by the Navigator - I can't remember his name -

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[redacted]

Major D - something -

Powers: Yes, I think so - I am almost positive - I am almost positive - after that we ate, took a sleeping pill and went to bed because we would have to get up early and while we were asleep, ah - ah - another pilot brought an airplane in and I think this might have been either [redacted] I think that was the way it was - either of those two, but I can't remember which one. And, we got up the next morning, also studied the maps again, last weather briefings, etc. a lot of this was done while we were pre-breathing, and there were two of us in case one of us should become ill or equipment malfunction the other would take over. I was to go if everything was all right. I don't remember exactly when

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[redacted]

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we got word that the mission was cancelled, but immediately upon getting this word the man who backed me up, who was pre-breathing with me, got dressed and took the airplane back to Adana. And then the next night I think the same thing happened, but another pilot brought it, and the man who had brought the plane the day before was to back me up and he had to be briefed on the route.

Interrogator: Gary, let me ask you a question. The plane came in, the mission is cancelled. Now, [] takes that plane back.

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Powers: I feel pretty sure it was [] - I can't be positive on that, but it seems to me that it was, but he is - if it was him, he was the one who took it back. But the man who brought the plane in, which was I believe either [] remained there to become No. 2 man behind me again the next day.

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Interrogator: And is this the same plane, the identical ship?

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Powers: There was a change in the airplane somewhere in this procedure. You see, this was cancelled about three times and there was three or four airplanes who came over - which came over - and there was, if I'm not mistaken, a change in the aircraft - I don't know whether this particular one only came that one time or it had made two trips over there. I don't know. But, the flying time was - inspection time was becoming due on the other and flying back and forth to Adana was running the time out and they had to get another airplane.

Interr: So - but there was - there were two planes now involved?

Powers: Yes.

Interr: The first one went up and went back, and then it may -

Powers: It may have made two trips, or it may not - I can't remember. But there was another airplane (illegible) and I had some special instructions on this particular airplane - this last one because of - we constantly ran fuel consumption tests on this and some of the last tests we ran showed that there was some fuel remaining

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in one of the leading edge, or - what do we call it - the (illegible) I think we call them, but the external tanks that stuck out from the front wing and Colonel Shelton mentioned this specifically - I remember it very good. There was a certain point in the northern part of the Soviet Union that, when I got there, I had - would be keeping track of my fuel I'd know how much I had and if I had enough fuel I was to continue the way the flight was planned, and it was to go around Norway over the water to a certain point and then come back down the west coast of Norway. But I had certain cut-off routes drawn in from points up in this northern part that I could go straight across Finland, Sweden, into Norway in case of emergency. Also on the maps there were fields that were marked as emergency landing fields in case of a flame out or some sort of trouble and I was told which would be best, which is not very good, and which - and one or two that - don't do it if you can possibly help it but if you can't do anything else, go on in there. But that was only, I think,

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on this particular airplane because it had had a little of fuel trouble. In fact, Colonel Shelton told me since it had that it might be best to go straight across from one of these points - I believe - I don't think I would have gone across Finland from that particular point, but to cut it short because he didn't know whether this would feed all the fuel or not and he wanted to make sure that I got there and it was planned pretty much maximum range and the weather wasn't exceptionally good at []

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Interr: Going back

Powers: Lets see, I think I've got ahead of myself again -

Interr: Can we safely say that the plane that was originally scheduled for this flight was not the plane that ultimately - that you ultimately flew?

Powers: Yes, as near as I can remember - I'm pretty sure I did not confuse this with any other

Interr: And this was caused by cancellations from day to day that required that the plane be flown back to Adana -

Powers: Yes.

Interr: If the plane did not go -

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Powers: Right.

Interr: And that was the case. So there was no way of knowing up until the last - the end of [] which plane would actually be used. Is that right?

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Powers: I had no way of knowing whatsoever. Or at least none of us there - well, maybe, maybe the commanding officer or someone -

Interr: Back at the base they would know what plane was being selected each day -

Powers: Yes, and then through communications they would inform the appropriate people there, I think. I don't know -but I had no way of knowing until after they had told me. But I can't remember exactly how many trips each plane made -

Interr: But I think that'll be pretty well administrative records somewhere -

Powers: I'm sure its recorded somewhere -

Interr: So, suppose you go ahead -

Powers: For the last - lets see - April and May - the night of April the 30th it was [] and myself who were being prepared to - for the flight the next day,

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myself as No. 1 and [] to go if anything

happened to my equipment or my health. []

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was to bring the airplane over, so John and I ate, went

to bed, slept, got up and this airplane was there. I

don't remember the number of the airplane but it was

there when we woke up. We got up, had a last weather

briefing - lets see - I don't remember when I exactly

found out which mission would be flown. I knowtha t

there was a lot of talk about it might be changed due to

weather but I don't know when I found out that this

particular one that went all the way across to []

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would be flown. There was another - another one

that we also studied that - lets see - is this right -

it seems to me that there was another - another flight

plan that went up into Russia up toward the Caspian

and Black Sea someway and then back down to Adana

but I can't remember that too much. We studied the

other because I think it was first priority and would

go if at all possible, but I don't remember when I

found out which one would be going. I think maybe

[]

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even before I left Adana I found out that this one would go if possible. This was the one they wanted most of all, but I don't remember when I knew that this was the preferred one, but I know I spent more time studying that one than anyone else. Its very hard to recall some of these things. Both John and I got up, had a last look at the maps, got the weather briefing from the Navigator, the personal equipment sergeant fixed us up to pre-breath, Colonel Shelton talked to us - I think to me primarily because everything was going fine and I was feeling all right and it looked as if I would go unless some of my equipment malfunctioned and my equipment had been checked out and it was all right so far. Ah - I don't remember which one it was, whether it was the Navigator or the Colonel who gave me this coin with the pin in it but that was given to me on that morning.

Interr: The Navigator was who? You can't remember his name?

Powers: Yes - s - if I am not mistaken it starts with a D. I can almost picture the name but I cannot think of it. I knew him very well, we got along, so I will remember it soon

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I think.

Interr: Who suited you up?

Powers: Sergeant - I believe it was [] - no -

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I don't know - seems like that name is the one it should be.

Interr: What part did [] play in getting you ready to go?

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Powers: Well, see, [] was gotten ready at the same time.

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Interr: I see.

Powers: Yes, he put on his helmet, got in another chair and was hooked up with the oxygen the same as I was so that there would be another man ready to go. Bob

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[] who had brought the plane in the night before stayed up to act as mobile control and to - and the duty of our mobile control was to monitor the check list as the pilot was in the airplane and prepared to start and etc., and we had an intercom system run by battery that we could talk to each other during this and he would watch and see that no mistakes were made and the procedures of starting and getting everything ready before take-off

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and he was also, in this particular instance, let me know when this flight would take off because we had no word. We had a scheduled take-off time of, I think it was about six o'clock in the morning local - local time? Seems like it was six o'clock, but I don't know whether that's local or Green - Green - but the time came for me to go out and get in the airplane if I made this take-off time if I were to be able to make it but we still did not know whether the mission would go or not. So, I got out, got in the airplane, went through all the procedures except starting, and waited, and at the take-off time no word had come yet and I finally got off the ground, I think, very close to thirty minutes late - twenty-eight or thirty minutes or something like that. So that threw off all my pre-computed celestial navigation but that was no problem. Ah - Bob

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[] was standing on a ladder and the sun was up and very hot and he took his shirt off and held it over me to shade me some because in those suits it is pretty miserable. He was standing there looking toward the communications building and there was some sort of

[]

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signal that he was supposed to see. If it was cancelled he would take me - help me get out of the airplane - if it was to go he would tell me, let me start, and get me off, and the scheduled take-off time came and passed and, I'd say about five or six minutes before - no less - four or five minutes before I actually took off, he got the signal, said "good luck", patted me on the back, closed the canopy - no - watched me - I don't remember whether he watched me start the engine or not - I think so - watched me start the engine, told me "good luck", "see me later", I think, patted me on the back, closed the canopy and got back out of the way. When the power unit was disconnected, I had no time to meet - I was to just get off as soon as possible. The power unit was disconnected, everything got back out of the way, and I took off as fast as I could and it was right at thirty minutes behind schedule.

Interr: Going back a little bit, let me ask you a question. Did

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[] give you the pin or did he - or did he not give

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give you the pin?

Powers: I don't think he did. I think it was either the Navigator or the Colonel - I can't remember - I know it was just stuck in my flying suit pocket.

Interr: Which pocket of your flying suit?

Powers: Let me think - one of the leg pockets, with the zipper - I think it was the right leg - its a pocket that's on the front of the upper right leg and it has a zipper so that nothing can fall out.

Interr: Did he put it in there or did the other person put it in there?

Powers: I can't remember exactly - I think maybe they put it in there and told me where it was and I saw them put it in.

Interr: Now, what was your understanding or instructions with regard to the use of the pin?

Powers: We had talked about this prior to this and it was Captain [redacted] the Intelligence Officer, who was talking to us about it. The instructions were that we could take it or not take it. It was up to us as pilots, and that was the same instructions we had with the other - ah - the pill

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that we had previously, and he told us that it was strictly up to us to take this or not to take it and he said - I don't know whether this particular briefing or not or maybe it was a special briefing for just two or three of us concerning this flight. We hadn't had these pins long I don't think - ah - that we might be tortured if anything happened to us - if we went down, and he said it might be a good idea to take this, try to conceal it on the person, that maybe this coin since it was a good luck charm would not be taken away or something, and we could save that, but that never worked. Ah - but if we could conceal it on ourselves - keep it - and we couldn't stand the torture, we could use it. Or, he said it would make a good weapon. And, I think they asked me that morning if I wanted to take it and I think I decided then to take it. I'm not sure whether it was that morning or one of the previous mornings when I got ready but it wasn't too long before that I decided to take it with me, but I was never

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instructed to kill myself.

Interr: You were under no instructions to destroy yourself with this pin in the event of capture?

Powers: No. I was only told - well, I didn't have to take it.

Interr: Uhhuh. Was there any final briefing or go away briefing as to what you should do or what you anticipated you would do in the event of capture?

Powers: No particular briefing for this particular mission, but a general briefing at sometime or the other for anywhere in the Soviet Union on any particular mission that something might happen and it was to get out if possible.

Interr: Had you declared yourself in connection with such a briefing as to what your philosophy was in the event of capture?

Powers: I don't know. I don't - we were all much too optimistic I think - didn't think anything would happen to the airplane and we trusted the airplane and its a good airplane. We had flown a lot in it and were very optimistic and earlier, I think, in '56, '57 we did a lot of thinking about this, but

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later, not a lot. We've had several briefings about different terrains, what to expect in different areas, how would be maybe the best way to get out of the country. We also had in our survival equipment a bunch of stuff that was completely useless. I didn't have an opportunity to use it, but I'm convinced now that it was no good whatsoever, and there's some things I want to say about this particular point later.

Interr: Well, we'll get onto the -

Powers: Yes. Lets see, you asked me whether I had made any particular - all I knew, I believe, was just that - well, I didn't think it would ever happen - over-confident, I guess, and I certainly hoped that it would never happen, but - was to destroy the airplane, that was the first thing, if possible. To - I had made up in my own mind what I would try to do, but I don't think I had ever talked it over with anybody, and that would be - the most likely thing would be malfunction of the airplane. I figured they couldn't shoot it down or anything like that. There -

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there would be a flameout, or a fuel line burst, or anyone of hundreds of things that could happen that wouldn't let the airplane fly, and what I, particularly, had had in my mind to do and had thought about myself, was to glide down and try to get it re-started if it was a flameout or try to correct the -

Visitor: Sorry to bother you, but you have a call here, John.

Interr: We are going back on the tape after about a six minute interval, and it is now 1532. The last item that you mentioned, Gary, you made a statement something to the effect that in talking it over you had you had made up your mind what you were going to do in the event of trouble with the plane.

Powers: Right, and my personal plan was - well, I didn't even think about any possibility of being shot down or think of anything happening at a high altitude. Only - all my plan included was being able to glide down, and I intended to go down, try to correct any trouble that could be corrected, try restarts if it was a flameout or something

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like that, and if - if unsuccessful and I knew I was going on into the ground to - at a very high altitude, as high as I could after making an attempt to restart, etc., knowing that I couldn't correct the trouble, to set the destructive switches and bail out so that the plane, the wreckage of the plane would hit somewhere away from me, and that I would be - I even thought about having the auto pilot on if possible and have it in a slight turn so that it might be headed in a different direction so that it might throw them off to where I was. I had in my survival equipment some food, matches, enough stuff to last a little while without any outside help. I even had some canned water, etc. I wouldn't have had to have done any hunting or anything immediately after - I'd have tried to get several miles in between that spot - in between myself and the plane as soon as possible. From then on it was just to do my best to evade capture and head in what I thought was the best direction from anywhere an accident might happen. But I don't know

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whether I ever discussed this - this plan of mine with anyone or not. Maybe some of the pilots talked it over together - what would you do in this case, etc. I can't remember, but I know we probably did discuss this a little bit among ourselves.

Interr: You can't recall any actual debriefing of you as to your philosophy or behavior in the event you were captured?

Powers: I can't recall any, no.

Interr: Can you say for certain that there was no such debriefing preparatory to your departure on this flight?

Powers: Now this is where I think I might confuse either the April the 9th flight and mine. Colonel Shelton on one of these flights - I think I asked him the particular question and I think it was on the April the 9th flight, I'm not sure.

25X1A9A Interr: flew that one?

Powers: Yes, he flew that one. And they had that from radar apparently because they asked where I was on that day, and I told them probably drunk in the club, but they didn't press that too much. I think it was that time that

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he told us - I asked him what story would be released in case something happened, what would be said and released to the public or to the press and there were - I think he said it would be either one of two things - lets see - there was nothing definite - definite - there was two choices, and he didn't know at the time what he would do , I don't think, which would be released, or I don't know whether he would make the decision on which one to be released. But there were two things and one of them, I think, was routine weather flight from [] to Turkey, and don't know what happened to it; the other was some sort - lets see, what was that - oh, yes, that the pilot had been acting strangely the last few days or something and something might have happened - he might have become a little crazy or something. Those were the two things - I think it was on this April the 9th flight. On my particular flight I cannot remember anything definite being said and I didn't ask the question for some reason or the other, I don't know why, or what story would be released. I had no idea what story would be put in the

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newspapers that had happened to me if anything did happen that the flight did not go through, and that was bad. I should have had something. Scooting ahead, I tried to make up one but it was no good immediately because of the equipment I had with me.

Interr: Well, going back to where we broke off, you were about to take off on the flight.

Powers: Yes, I started up - they moved the equipment out of the way - took off as soon as possible - it was very close, I think 28 minutes but I call it, say, approximately 30 minutes after the first scheduled take-off time, and I was to climb directly on course, and we had a system of signals, not with radio transmissions but with clicks on the radio transmitter and receiver, and if I didn't click at all that meant that everything was all right, but if I gave a certain number of clicks and I don't remember the exact system, what it was, that meant that I would be coming back, that meant that I would be coming back, that something had happened, and I think that [] was to monitor the radio in case I got in any sort of trouble for, I believe, 30 minutes after

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take-off and that's approximately the range of the radio. Maybe I could hear him a little farther or he could hear me but we had the time and I believe it was 30 minutes. I think when he went off the air he clicked me, I don't remember, but I didn't answer anything. There was - contrails were a little higher than expected, but I got above those, so that was all right, it was overcast for a very long way - when I crossed the border into the Soviet Union, but I got a good - is there anything you want to know in between this time that I might have left out, or to just continue along?

Interr: No, you just continue along to the best of your recollection.

Powers: Across the border there was an undercast and I couldn't see the ground, but according to the time I knew I was very close and approximately when I crossed it. There was a city there inside several miles inside the Soviet Union - I don't remember the name of the city - I could show it on the flight map and I might even be able to find it on this one if it is all right.

Interr: Yes, go right ahead.

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Powers: No - no it's not here.

Interr: It's back off that map -

Powers: But it might have been - well, I don't know, but anyway I had a radio frequency on the map for a radio in this particular city and the frequency was right - I don't think I ever picked up a call sign but the radio compass was pointing in the right direction. I took a swing as I passed this and found out that I was very close to course, but I couldn't see the ground. I went on and I can't remember the exact times I arrived at different places but it was very close to the scheduled flight time between each point. There was a rocket range east of the Aral Sea and south of that - that was my first target, I think, I turned the cameras on etc. I think it was. But south of that it cleared up and there was - it looked to me like desert land - the map showed a big river with some smaller streams running into it but it was very confusing and I think it was because it was spring of the year and these small streams were in flood and they were big and I was a little confused but I

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figured out I was to the right of course - I figured 20 or 30 miles - when I found myself on the ground, so I corrected back to course - not directly back over but to intercept course because there was nothing underneath this area that anyone was interested in as far as I knew. I had no special instructions to get any information or turn any cameras on along this area. So, I corrected back over gradually - got up to just south of the rocket launching site that I was told would be there - there was a river there and the cloud started again on that river and I never did see that first target - this rocket launching site and I think I was still a little to the right of course there but I couldn't pinpoint myself exactly because of the cloud coverage and the rivers all being bigger than they were supposed to be on the map - than the map showed them to be and I couldn't tell which river was which by looking at the ground and looking at the map. Just prior to getting to my first target there I observed a contrail about - I estimated I remember writing it down on the map - 20 miles to

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the right of my course going in an opposite direction to myself. A few minutes later I observed another contrail approximately the same distance to the right of my course going in the other direction very close to parallel, almost in a straight line but he was to the right and I assumed that they were looking for me but they made no maneuvers - just straight and that's the only contrails -

Interr: Were they below you, or -

Powers: Well, you see I was pulling no contrails so he had to be below me but I don't know what altitude he might have been but it didn't worry me because it looked like he was quite a ways below me. So, I assume there that they were tracking me. I ran into the clouds again and couldn't get any coverage on the first target. Now, I observed an airfield off to the right - I think I can show you the approximate area that; its in when I see a map or a similar map to the one I had - that it wasn't annotated on the map, so it might be something new and it might not - I don't know. There was some course corrections to make here and since it was cloudy again I just turned what the map said and left

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a few degrees in the - to correct for the little more wind that I figured had blown me to the right of course. I think after leaving this first target area here I was to turn several degrees to the right - I don't believe it was as much as 45 degrees - I can't remember the headings but I do believe that during this time I was heading west of north, but I don't remember how many degrees. And, I hadn't made enough wind correction because I still kept drifting to the right of course, I found out later, but going up through there nothing happened - I couldn't see anything on the ground - I tried to use my pre-computed celestial navigation - I tried to take a shot at the sun with the sextant but it was computed for the original take-off time and I was 30 minutes late and I couldn't get any information out of this. A little - lets see - I can't remember where the clouds started thinning out - but it was approximately somewhere between half and three-quarters way - a half and three-quarters of the distance to the city of Sverdlovsk - I don't know the exact pronunciation, and the clouds began to get thin

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and I could see through them but there was still clouds there. I observed off to the right - wait a minute now - somewhere along in this area south of Chelyabinsk, or a city there, I started having a little auto pilot trouble - the - lets see, what is it - the pitch control - so I disconnected it, flew it by hand a while, connected it back and it worked fine for several minutes - I don't know how long, but it was all right then and then it started acting up again, so I did the same thing again and it worked fine again for a while and then - but a shorter time. So I decided to cut it off completely and fly it by hand. I could have made a decision there to either turn back or go on, but I was what I considered about half way if I took the short cuts that I was briefed - that I could take at the northern part of my route . I would have been closer to - to the landing place there than I would be by going back to Turkey or back down here. This was - this map doesn't quite go - I don't know whether it goes far enough west or not. Where is Sverdlovsk - is it on here?

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Interr: Yes - here we are -

Powers: Here we are, yes. Now lets see, this was in the clear - Chelyabinsk - this was in the clear - right down in here somewhere the clouds were getting thin -

Interr: Chelyabinsk was in the clear? That's the pronunciation of it?

Powers: I think they called it Chelyabinsk or something like that. It was completely in the clear - the clouds were thin several miles south of that place - I could see through them, and I picked up a radio station that was the right frequency that I had on my map from Chelyabinsk. I corrected back to course there, because by the radio compass I knew I was too close to this city of Chelyabinsk - I should have been farther to the left , so I corrected back and got on course in this area. South of Chelyabinsk just a little bit the auto pilot gave me the trouble and I decided not to use it. From somewhere in this area here - I think I can get ^{an} approximate position. I saw - what is - a tank farm - I don't know - they were big tanks - something like an oil storage place - that's what I thought it was

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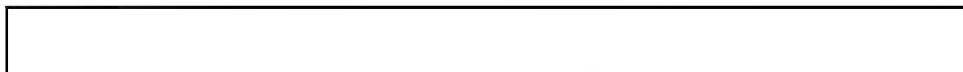
and I annotated that on the map giving an approximate position because I didn't know exactly where I was there - I knew I was to the right of course - I knew this was to the right of me and I made a circle there in that area - it was where this farm was. I corrected back on course and there was some important targets at - well, lets see - at some lakes over here - I had been given some information - lets see - lakes northwest of Chelyabinsk - I had been given some information about an area around that lake - there was something there that they especially wanted a picture of - they had a whole line through there that they wanted to get very badly. It was perfectly clear - a beautiful day there. I went over this particular place and I think there were a few course corrections in here - I mean course changes on my map in this area, but I can't remember what they were. But I went over this particular place that they were particularly interested in. All I knew about it, or all the information I had about it was where it was, which was exactly right and they thought it was a building complex of some kind which it was.

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But the buildings were big buildings - it was a well laid out place - it could have been something like a military - army field with big barracks - something like that. It seemed like there was a lot of distance between the buildings - it didn't look like a factory area but they were right in it being a building complex and they were exactly right on the position that this was - on position. I went over that good and was congratulating myself because the weather had changed and the cameras worked perfectly, or at least the lights told me they did, and I was feeling good. North of there, after that particular flight line, I had a turn almost 90 degrees to the right and I think, if I remember correctly, that leg was about four minutes, but I can't be positive. From there I turned, according to my map, back - left turn over 90 degrees to a heading of west of north some way - I don't remember what it was. But, I had a long flight line that led over Sverdlovsk - not over it but over the southern edge of the city on a - I think northwesterly



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direction - let's see - it was in this direction - yes -
in a northwesterly direction, and the flight line went on a
southern outskirts of the city, and right exactly on my
flight path which was not annotated on the map as it went
by the city - I'd say almost directly south of the city was
an airfield. My map didn't show it or the information I
received did not show this airfield, and I was lined up
perfectly on this flight line - everything was fine -
I just rolled on my turn and got lined up taking some
interim instrument readings and recording oxygen -
normal procedure - when I felt or heard an explosion.
I have no idea what or anything - it just - I don't know
whether I heard it or not but I felt it - just like everything
stopped, and I can't say that I heard it - I don't know.
It seemed to me that it - well, I immediately looked up
and all I could see through my canopy was just orange
light - definitely orange is all I know, but everything I
could see was that color. This explosion seemed to me
to be behind me and to the right. I was looking at the
instruments at the time - I had just looked at them -

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everything was perfect - the only thing wrong with the aircraft was the auto pilot pitch control and I wasn't using the auto pilot. I had been straight and level on this particular leg of one or two minutes - I don't know - not very long - everything lined up and started taking my readings and then the explosion. I remember saying to myself, or saying out loud, I don't know, I think it was "Oh, God, I've had it now", or something like that - the first thing that entered my mind, and I couldn't tell you how much time passed - it would be impossible - it just seemed that everything was standing still for a little while. I just saw that red glow, looked down - the right wing started to drop - I corrected it and brought the right wing up fine. The nose started to drop and I pulled back on the stick and there was no connection between the controls and the tail, and the plane just nosed straight over and I feel sure that the wings broke off broadside of the wind that way - they must have folded down this way and came off. The airplane tumbled on over, ended

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up in an inverted position with nose high - I don't know how much of the airplane was left. It was nose high - canopy here - my head was pointing - I'd say - well I can't estimate what angle it was to the ground - 45 degrees or more, but it wasn't flat - straight down - the nose was high and the tail or the airplane was low and it started spinning very violently, and it slid me forward against my seat belt all the way/^{forward}and I couldn't get back to the back of the seat. I immediately said "OK, I've got to get out" - reached up to arm the destructor and then I thought, no, I'd better see if I can use this ejection seat, so I started squirming around trying to force myself back against these G-forces - the G-forces, by the way, were throwing me in - relative to the position I was in - up and forward - not directly toward the nose of the airplane but forward and toward the canopy rail almost in a line from the seat directly above the instrument panel. And I have no way of knowing how many G's, but there were several - I couldn't force myself with hands and feet back to my seat and I always kept my seat belt fairly tight, but it had given

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enough or it wasn't tight enough so that I was too far forward to use the ejection seat - it was impossible, or I felt that both of my legs would come off - it would hit the canopy. So, that's the only way -

Interr: You mean you wouldn't have had enough clearance -

Powers: I wouldn't have had enough clearance to get my legs out. I couldn't think of anything at that time but the ejection seat - I didn't even realize that there was any other way to get out of the airplane at that particular time. I kept trying to get back in that seat so that I could get prepared to hit the destructor and get out, and this thing was falling and I kept glancing at the altimeter and came on down and the last time I looked at the altimeter it was 34,000 feet or somewhere in that area, and it was unwinding pretty fast and I am sure there was a lag and I figured I was a little lower. Then I remembered something that [] [] had told me that - he had had a crash in this airplane, and he said that he couldn't get his canopy off and he told himself to - talking to himself, he said "Bob,

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you've got to stop and think", and he said - he had told me that he just stopped and thought and said the sills is what's holding the canopy on, unloosened them and got out. Well that - I don't know why that came to my mind, but I remembered him saying that, and I told myself the same thing. "Stop, think", and it suddenly came to me that I could open the canopy and climb out, and that's the - this was the last time I looked at the altimeter at 34,000 feet or lower, right in that area there the altimeter said 34,000, give or take a few hundred. So, I stopped and thought that I could possibly climb out. I reached up and got both the emergency and normal canopy release handles, pulled them back, the normal side released first and it flew open and fell on off very nicely, and I immediately opened my seat belt, and the G-forces raised me up in a sort of a standing position. My oxygen hose was still hooked up - I had forgotten to disconnect that but I hadn't forgotten to pull my emergency oxygen supply.

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That was already on - I did that one of the first things, but I was at least half way out of the airplane leaning leaning over the top of the canopy like this and I think that the only thing that was holding me in was my oxygen hose. I tried to get back in the airplane because I had to use that destructor switch. I couldn't get back in - I couldn't get out - just hanging there with my head out in the air, and some way I knocked this rear view mirror off - I remember seeing it float off forward relative to me. I tried to reach down in the airplane back here to get to the destructor switches - I couldn't get to them and I knew I was below 34,000 feet - I didn't know how high I was - had no way of knowing when I first opened the canopy my face plate fogged up completely - couldn't see. I knew I was getting close to the ground - I had no idea how close, and I knew after trying to get back in there so I could get to the destruction switches that I couldn't do it - it was impossible, so I just gave a big kick - lunge - and something gave on that oxygen hose - I don't know

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what broke but something gave, maybe it just pulled out of the quick disconnect there even though I had it locked - somewhere along in there it gave and I went off into the air. The chute opened almost immediately. I didn't want it to do that - I didn't pull the ripcord, but when I had opened my lap belt apparently the automatic - the automatic part of the chute that opens it automatically at a certain altitude had remained with that seat belt and pulled as it - as I flew up against the front of the canopy. All I can remember is that I floated off over the nose of the airplane and a great feeling of relief came over me - I remember that, and I felt the opening shock of the parachute, and that surprised me. I knew by that - well, it took a few seconds - minutes - time - I don't know - that I was below 15,000 feet, so I took my face plate off, and my estimation was that I was above 10,000 feet, but I have no idea of the exact altitude, but it was high - it took several minutes to get to the ground. I saw some wreckage of the airplane coming down as I was coming down in the chute. I thought it was a small

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piece but later on I got to thinking about it and it could have been even a whole wing or something, but it was a flat piece, but depending on the distance away - the size - it looked pretty small to me. So, if it was - say a wing it was a long way away, if it was a smaller piece it was closer to me, but I have no way of knowing how far it was or what it was. It was floating down like a leaf, flopping and turning very slowly. I think that's the only part of the airplane I saw. I never did see where the part I got out of went - I don't know how much was in that part - how much of it was together, but then I got to thinking I had to do something, and I started trying to think of what I had. I reached around for my seat pack and I couldn't find it. I thought I had lost it, but later on I found out that I hadn't lost it - it was still on, but I think maybe the straps that hold it to the parachute had slipped out and were letting it hang too far down but I couldn't feel it underneath me where it should be. I don't remember feeling it against my legs or anything. I can't be too

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sure that it was with me, but I know that the people who picked me up on the ground also had that thing, and it didn't look as if it had hit the ground hard, so I assumed that it was still on the chute. Now, maybe things banging against my legs all the time - but I didn't feel it and I thought it was gone. I started thinking what I had on me. I remembered that I had a map with escape - not escape routes but showing routes to - in a southern part of my course, showing routes from there to Turkey, to Iran, from various ^{points} ~~parts~~ along my course in case something happened and I had to come back out this way. So, I took that out, tore it up into small pieces and just threw it out in the air. There was this coin - I thought of that. I reached in my pocket - I took my gloves off • reached in my pocket, got the coin out, unscrewed the ring that the - that the chain is usually attached to - you know how one of these coins are made to hang on a chain - it has a little loop in the top - well, that screwed out, and I poured the needle out in my hand and threw the

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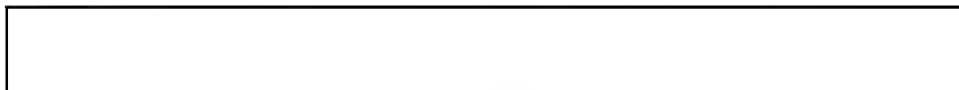
coin away and put the needle in, I think, the right pocket of my flying suit. I'm pretty sure it was. I kept looking around - I was - I didn't have any idea - I kept drifting seemed like one way and the other - I couldn't tell where I was going. Maybe it was just my imagination, but I think there was wind shift in the area - I don't know.

Interr: This was just the pin with the sheath, the scabbard -

Powers: Yes, the sheath and the pin.

Interr: Yes, you got rid of the coin?

Powers: I got rid of the coin, and I dropped the pin in my pocket. I don't know - I just assumed that the coin was much too obvious and I couldn't keep it but maybe just a pin in the pocket would be less noticeable. I couldn't tell where I was going to hit. I couldn't tell - it seemed very thinly populated country down there as near as I could tell. There was some woods - patches of woods in several places and a fairly big woods in one direction from me and I tried to drift over to it and did manage to get in that direction but not far enough because it seemed like I would head that way for a while and then go back the



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other way. There was some lakes there in the area. I saw a dam - I remember that - as I was coming down in the parachute, well, when I got down closer to the ground I could see about where I was going to hit and it wasn't a very favorable position. It was about 50 to 100 yards from a village - not a very large village - I guess 10, 20 houses - I don't know how many houses but a populated area. There was some telephone or high tension lines or power lines or something running through the field I hit in and either a river or a creek. I missed the power lines by several feet - I don't how much - fairly close to them, but not in any danger of hitting them I saw, but I landed about 25 or 30 feet from two men. One of them was driving a tractor, the other was on the ground and it looked to me as if they hadn't seen me. As I was watching them they were going about their business. But as I was coming down I noticed a car coming down the road to this village and I was - we were both approaching this area at the same time. I was getting closer to the ground and he got to the village. I

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saw him turn to the left - came out to the edge of the village - two men got out and ran toward the area I was going to hit in. I hit the ground, fell, the chute was still billowing out some and I released the strap on the shoulder, collapsed the chute - one of the men there at the tractor had come over and had run out to the parachute to grab it to help collapse it, but I got this before he got to it and the strap went off and the chute collapsed. The other man - I don't know whether it was the other one from the tractor or one of the two from the car - came over and helped me up. I don't know whether they knew who, what, or anything, but there was no hostility, no nothing. One grabbed - was going to help collapse the chute - the other helped to pick me up. By the time I got on my feet and looked around there was at least 30 school children and a lot of grownups coming and - all around. They helped me take off my helmet - tried to talk to me - wouldn't say anything - tried to get the helmet off, and they helped me take it off and they kept trying to talk to me and I kept shaking my head. One of them - I had a - had a gun - pistol - with the silencer

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and one of them got that. I also had a hunting knife on the parachute - I don't know whether it was the same one or another one took that away. Lets see - all this time I was trying to get out of my chute harness - I took the helmet off first and then got out of the chute harness - I don't remember - maybe - yes - because he got the knife from the chute harness while it was onto me, so - well I don't know just how it went right there -

Interr:

I think we will take a short recess. We are now approaching the end of Tape 1 at 14 - at 1614 hours, 13 February 1962.

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